



T. C. Horne

THREE YEARS CAPTIVE AMONG THE INDIANS (Continued from page four)

take the meat to keep his lips and gums from being lacerated by the sharp stick. Both Indians laughed and then another bite was held to his mouth, and took that also. A large piece was then handed to him, which he took, and commenced to eat.

The Indians packed up and set out again, still making John ride naked behind one of them. Before noon they met a large band of Indians of their own tribe, Comanches, and led by their head chief, "Buffalo Hump."

He talked to the two Indians and then rode around and closely examined the captive. He seemed to be angry at the way they had treated him, and sent John on to the main camp in charge of only one Indian taken from his band, and to punish the other two made them join his band and go on the raid which he was now starting out on. He also furnished a buffalo skin for the captive to ride on.

When the main camp was reached it proved to be a large village, situated on the Wichita river, near where the town of Wichita Falls is now on the Fort Worth and Denver railroad. The rows of tipis or wigwams extended a mile or more along the river, but far enough back to be out of danger of high water.

John was taken to the center of the village, where there was a large tepee, and turned over to an old Indian squaw—the chief's wife. The first thing the Indian woman did for John was to wrap a dressed deer skin around his naked and blistered body, and tie it on with a leather string around the waist. In the next few days she made him some Indian clothes out of dressed skins, leggings, moccasins, cap, etc. She also painted a red spot on each cheek and one on the end of his nose. She treated him well, except she made him work nearly all the time bringing water and wood, dressing skins, attending to horses and other things. There were many horses being herded in the valley, and a good percent of them belonged to the chief. These horses had been stolen at various times from the settlers. The great chief had now gone to get more horses, scalps and captives.

In the center of the village and near the chief's tepee was a pole set up in the ground, and it was hung full of scalps, black scalps, long hair of women and baby scalps. At night the Indians would gather around this pole and dance and sing, the scene lit up by numerous fires. War parties were coming and going most of the time, bringing in horses and hanging fresh scalps on the pole. One party brought in the scalp

of a woman with long, thick hair, and John imagined that it was the scalp of his mother. It looked like her hair when she would take it down at home to comb it.

The Indians were not always successful in their raids. Many brave pioneers were in the settlements, and the Indians were often beaten with the loss of warriors. Occasionally, also, in their raids among the whites they encountered the Texas Rangers and generally got the worst of it. When meeting up with one of these disasters they would hurry back to the village and have a big pow wow for several days of mourning. The Indian boys annoyed John very much. They gathered around him, pulled his hair, slapped him in the face and did many things to annoy and hurt him. For fear of the other Indians, he made no resistance, but finally the old squaw became tired of these attacks, and made signs to John to hit them. John was a stout, frontier boy, and he went at the young Indians like a wildcat. He caught hold of their long hair, jerked them to the ground, stamped upon them and

had a dozen or more running away. After that drubbing they left him alone.

When the chief came back, his squaw evidently told him what a fighter their captive was, for soon he made a bet with another chief that the white boy could whip his boy. They bet a horse each, and led the two boys up near "Buffalo Hump's" tepees, where the fight was to take place. When the boy was brought up whom John had to fight, he took a good look at him and was satisfied this boy was not in the scrap which he had with the other Indian boys, and also that he was well made and taller than he was. He dreaded the encounter with this Indian lad. The great chief of the Comanches was betting a horse on him, and he must fight to win. If he lost, what could a poor captive pale face boy expect from a maddened savage who held human life so lightly.

The fight was long and desperate, and soon both were covered with blood. John could elude and throw the Indian, but could not keep him down and beat him until the victory was won, as he tried time and again to do. The Comanche boy could whirl as quick as a cat and throw John off, and he had to regain his feet quickly to keep himself from being pinned down. At last the Indian boy began to weaken. John's hard knuckles had beaten the skin from his head and face and his lungs almost knocked loose by hard blows and kicks in the side. After a few more rounds the young brave turned his back, staggered to his father and stood with bowed head, mutely admitting his defeat.

"Buffalo Hump" claimed the horse and took hold of the rope which the other chief was holding but the chief was not satisfied and would not turn loose. He went to the white boy and examined his knuckles, as if he suspected some trick, and still would not give up the horse. Loud, angry words ensued and both chiefs drew their tomahawks and stood facing each other in a menacing attitude. At this crisis, the squaw of "Buffalo Hump" rushed between them and held up her hands. Strange to say, both chiefs at once belted their tomahawks, and the horse was duly delivered to "Buffalo Hump."

For several days after the fight John could hardly walk or move about and his right hand was swollen to twice its natural size, and he could not sleep for pain. Finally the old squaw beat up some herbs and made a poultice, which she bound to the hand, which soon had a good effect and the swelling decreased.

As time went on, the chief allowed John to have a bow and some arrows, but without spikes in the arrows, and let him go out with the Indian boys to shoot rabbits and prairie dogs. The Indian boys were not allowed to have spikes on their arrows either, but the arrows were sharpened, not flat, but round, to a small, tapering point, and then burnt black in hot ashes to harden them. Small game was killed by them. From then on John and the Indian boys got along. He and the boy whom he fought often hunted together and became great friends. They had many friendly bouts of wrestling, running foot races, etc., to see who was the better in these things. John learned the Comanche dialect, and could understand the Indians. He found out that when he and the Indian boy whose name was Nacoma, were out alone that Nacoma was responsible for him, and must bring him back or kill him if he attempted to escape.

When John was about fifteen years of age he was allowed to have spikes in his arrows, and go out with the warriors to kill deer and antelope. The buffalo range was some distance off, and he was not allowed to go that far. They would not let him go on raids, even to fight other tribes of Indians, which they often did. On one occasion a band started out to make a raid in the white settlements, but soon returned minus six warriors. They stated that long before they reached the settlements they were attacked by a party of white men who rode splendid horses, and who fought so fiercely and so close up that they were bound to give way with the loss of six warriors. This encounter created a good deal of excitement in the village. The men whom these warriors encountered were Texas Rangers.

During the years of captivity when John had become an Indian to all outside appearances, he still longed to see the folks at home, and laid plans to escape. He had become satisfied that his mother had not been killed by the Indians, as he feared. From the conversation of warriors, he learned that most of their raids were near Red River. When he laid a plan to escape and thought of the long stretch of wilderness country two hundred miles, which lay between him and his home, a territory constantly being crossed by roving bands of Indians, Comanches, Kiowas, Lipans, Caddoes, Wacos and other tribes, he felt almost certain he would be recaptured.

More than three years passed, and in the meantime General Houston had made a treaty with the Comanches at the "Wichita Village," as it was now called by the whites, for the Texas Rangers had fought and defeated a band of warriors and located their stronghold. Part of the stipulation of the treaty was that the Comanches should bring all of their captives to the State Capital, Austin, and there turn them over to their friends and relatives.

The three long years had been a sorrowful period to the inmates of the Squaw home. They had no idea of the fate of John, whether killed or yet alive. His father went about attending to affairs at home, or following and fighting hostile bands of raiding Indians. He seldom men-



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ALL OVER THE WORLD

tioned the name of his son where the mother could hear.

The time came for the treaty proposition to be put into execution, and the people were notified far and near for all those who lost children by Indian capture to come to Austin on a certain date to identify the captives that would be brought there.

Here was a gleam of hope for the bereaved home of the Sowell. The mother wept for joy, and the negro woman shouted. Captain Sowell, however, left home for Austin with a heavy heart, hoping against hope and fearing and dreading to come back without John. When the captain arrived at Austin the Indians had not yet come in, but General Houston was there, and told Captain Sowell, whom he knew, that they were escorted in by a company of rangers and a runner who had arrived that morning reported that they would be in on the following day. It was known that the Indians had quite a lot of captives.

When the Indians arrived at Austin great excitement prevailed. Friends and relatives rushed here and there calling names and occasionally shouts of joy announcing that some lost one had been found. Captain Sowell was under the impression that he would pick his son out of any crowd. With these thoughts he walked slowly through the noisy crowd, looking here and there. John recognized his father, but sat erect and still on his pony, waiting to see if his father would recognize him. Three times the old man walked around his horse, but merely glanced at the tall, straight young warrior, as he supposed, who sat still and looked way off towards the Colorado river. The captain finally gave up his search.

General Houston was watching the father, and was much interested, for he held the frontier captain in great esteem.

Sowell sat down, bowed his head, and covered his face with his hands. John, who had been watching him out of the corner of one eye, sprang lightly to the ground. He was directly behind his father, and taking a few steps tapped him on the shoulder and said:

"Hello, Pap! Don't you know me?"

The captain sprang up as if shot, and whirled around. He knew the

voice, but not the wild looking painted Indian, but something in the eyes and merry smile convinced him that this was his son, and with open arms clasped him in a strong embrace and with great emotion exclaimed:

"Johnny! My son, my son!"

General Houston witnessed the scene, and tears rolled down his cheek, and he came forward to greet the lost boy. Then came a long exchange of explanations between father and son. After they had satisfied each other with an account of the three lost years, John's hair was cut, the paint washed off, and he was clad in the clothes of his own race.

It was a long ride to the Sowell home, but the two finally arrived

there. While riding over the prairie and some distance from the house, they were discovered by John's mother and the negro women. The captain beckoned with his hand. This removed all doubts, and the mother and her servants came running. The negro women shouted and madly and clasped their hands.

"Bless de Lawd, here's Johnny! Bless de Lawd, here's Johnny!"

And John was folded in his overjoyed mother's arms.

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Such a Lovely Cshristmas. Yes.

1923 looks bright. Yes!

He: "I could dance on like this forever."

She: "Oh, I'm sure you don't mean it. You're bound to improve, by having your clothes pressed at the

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He: "We are not satisfied unless you are."

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